

Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee – testimony from Peter Mathiesen

-Commentary on 16B antlerless moose.

Hello, I am a representative from the Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee based in Talkeetna. Thank you for your time considering our comments.

**PROPOSAL 146 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limit for moose.**

We are concerned about the overpopulation of moose in 16B and are in support of opening up additional hunting opportunities in 16B. Which includes introducing an antlerless moose hunt and changing the tier 2 moose hunt to a any moose hunt. Currently there are authorized antlerless hunts in adjacent units 16A and 14B.

With this area booming with moose, the committee is concerned that a lack of an expanded hunt coupled with a big snow year...which historically happens every 10 years, will propagate a crash of the population.

As a committee, we unanimously recognize the data received from ADF&G biologists on moose numbers and sustainable yield and it is also corroborated by anecdotal evidence from local resident hunters.

**Commentary in support of re-authorizing antlerless moose hunt in unit 14.**

In addition, this committee is in support for re authorization of antlerless moose hunt in unit 14. Based on moose data provided by ADF&G indicated a need to reduce moose numbers. In addition, high moose numbers that parallel the Parks Highway has made for treacherous driving conditions in high snow years.

**Commentary on proposal 128 5 AAC 92.540(3)(C)(i). unit 13 Clearwater controlled use change proposal.**

We believe the Clearwater controlled use hunting area should be completely free of motorized vehicles used for hunting in its entirety including the Maclaren Summit trail as it was originally written.

We are against amending or expanding the area to include the use of motorized vehicles in any part of the area.

Rational: There is no shortage of motorized hunting opportunities in southcentral Alaska. Specifically, most of the Denali Highway itself is open to motorized hunting. The Clearwater controlled use area is one of only a few non-motorized hunting areas in the state.

Conversely we would like to see more non-motorized areas opened up along the Denali highway. The increase in motorized hunting traffic coincides with a booming Nelchina caribou population in the last 10 years has criss-crossed the tundra along the expanse of the Denali Highway with hundreds of new trails ripping up vital caribou habitat.

Note: The Board of Game deferred this proposal as amended from the 2018 Central/Southwest Region Meeting. It was previously numbered Proposal 123. The board amended the proposal to exclude the Maclaren Summit Trail from the Controlled Use Area as described below, which will allow motorized access or transportation of game on the established Maclaren Summit Trail, whereas before it was restricted.

**PROPOSAL 128 5 AAC 92.540(3)(C)(i). Controlled Use Areas.**

Modify the Clearwater Creek Controlled Use Area description as follows:

,Ä (C) Clearwater Creek Controlled Use Area: (i) the area consists of that portion of Unit 13(B) north of Denali Highway, west of up to 100 feet east of the Maclaren Summit trail from the Denali Highway north to the southern boundary of the Controlled Use Area, and the Maclaren River drainage, and east of, and including eastern bank drainages of the Middle Fork of the Susitna River downstream from and including the Susitna Glacier, and the eastern bank drainages of Susitna River downstream from its confluence with the Middle Fork (ii) The area is closed to the use of any motorized vehicle for hunting, including the transportation of hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of game, except for brown/grizzly bears, wolves, and small game from March through June 30; however, this provision does not prohibit motorized access, or transportation of game on the Denali Highway and adjacent highway vehicle parking areas;

The Clearwater Creek Controlled Use Area (CCUA) is closed to the use of any motorized vehicle for hunting, including the transportation of hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of game, except for brown/grizzly bears, wolves, and small game from March 15 through June 30. The area provides a large hunting area, accessible from the Denali Highway, where roadside and non-motorized hunters have a reasonable opportunity to harvest moose and caribou. Recently there has been some confusion by the public regarding the location of the Maclaren Summit Trail relative to the eastern boundary of the CCUA. Recent GIS analysis conducted by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has identified that the trailhead and the majority of the Maclaren Summit Trail lies within the Maclaren River drainage and the controlled use area. The original proposal (Proposal 123) added the remainder of the Maclaren Summit Trail to the CCUA description whereas the amended proposal removes the entire trail from the CCUA. PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F17-041)

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